

# County Line

News from the Government Offices of Lumpkin County, Georgia

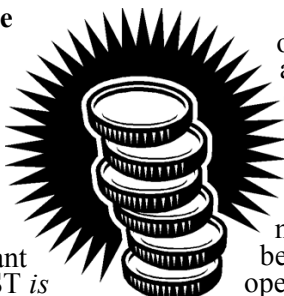
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## SPLOST Sufficient Despite Spending Dip

We all know spending is down these days, and that means there are fewer pennies coming in to the county coffers through the current Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax. However, county officials want to assure citizens the SPLOST *is* generating enough revenue to cover the debt service obligations on the county's new Judicial Center. The Judicial Center, under construction and scheduled for completion early next year, is a "Level I" priority on the list



of a dozen capital projects approved by voters that could be funded through the SPLOST monies collected through first quarter of 2014. Wishing some of that SPLOST money could be used to beef up the county's operating budget? It's a nice thought, but against state law. SPLOST collections may only be used to fund capital projects and, more specifically, only those capital projects listed on the SPLOST referendum.



## Park Forest Will Be Well Managed, Officials Say

Lumpkin County does expect some revenue to result from planned tree-cutting activities at Blackburn Park, but officials say that revenue will not come at the expense of destroying the forest, and clear cutting to maximize profits from timber operations will not happen. Residents familiar with the former state park land adjacent to Blackburn Elementary School in southern Lumpkin County have been concerned about the fate of the property since talk of "logging operations" began in spring. Responding to citizen concerns, the county developed and recently shared some general plans for the 193-acre site.

A broad-brush conceptual plan for a recreational area has athletic fields and related amenities carefully located and centralized to minimize disturbance of the forested areas, grading requirements and the need for costly infrastructure. Preliminary plans also call for more than two miles of walking trails, constructed mostly over original trail beds in the former park, along with picnic areas, pavilions, playgrounds and a dog park. Adherence to Best Management Practices during park development would protect environmentally sensitive areas, including two creeks and an existing lake, officials emphasize.

With no money in the county budget to develop the park in the near future, attention is focusing on cleaning up and managing the long-neglected natural asset. A registered forester is being brought in to advise the county on using selective cutting to weed out diseased, damaged and other undesirable trees and restore the health and beauty of the forest over time, an approach supported by Lumpkin County Extension Agent Greg Sheppard.

## Emergency Call for Ambulance Donations

With just weeks to go before the community is expected to top off a fund that will pay for a new ambulance, we were \$4,200 short of the goal as this newsletter went to press. Reaching that goal—\$50,000—will trigger the award of a matching \$50,000 grant from The Timken Foundation, an independent foundation supporting projects in communities hosting Timken Co. manufacturing plants. The foundation has already made a generous \$100,000 donation toward the cause. Lumpkin County Fire/EMS Department officials say the need for a new ambulance is critical.

Ambulances responded to more than 1600 calls in the first six months of 2009. To meet current demand for service throughout the 285-square-mile county, three reliable ambulances are needed. Two of the three now in service are well past their prime and a third is good for little more than spare parts. The urgency to pull in the last \$4,200 in donations cannot be overemphasized, officials say.



## Judicial Center Update

Construction of Lumpkin County's new Judicial Center is still on schedule and under budget. And it doesn't take nearly as much imagination as it once did to envision how the facility will look when it's finished. After months of below grade and ground level foundation work, the 50,000 square foot building seemed to rise out of the landscape along Morrison Moore Parkway overnight, racing its way toward a completion date in early 2010. With the roof trusses in place, passersby can now easily picture what the overall size and shape of the facility will be. With input from project managers, consultants, the county's Judicial Center Building Committee and the Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners, decisions being made this summer involve such issues as technology and security—the data/voice cabling system and video surveillance system, for example—critical to a facility with this purpose.



## Watch for Budget Meeting Announcements

Lumpkin County officials continue to grapple with budget details that ultimately will play a part in determining what citizens' property tax bills will look like this year. (Remember, 65% of the property taxes collected are school taxes determined by the Lumpkin County Board of Education's millage rate, not county taxes. The millage rate for city property owners is established by the Dahlonega City Council.) Notices of remaining public meetings and hearings pertaining to the county budget and proposed millage rate increases above the roll-back rate will be given in The Dahlonega Nugget. The entire proposed 2010 budget can be viewed on the county's website. Visit [www.lumpkincounty.gov](http://www.lumpkincounty.gov) and click on Departments at the left, then choose the "Finance" option.

Please mail donations to 57-A Pinetree Way, Dahlonega, GA 30533 or drop them off at Fire Station #1. Make checks payable to Lumpkin County Fire/EMS and indicate "ambulance donation." For details call 706-864-3030.

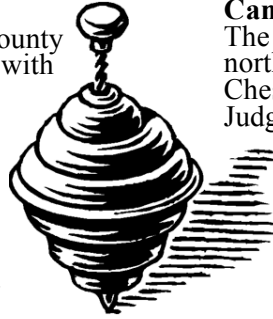
## Lumpkin County . . . continued from reverse side

### Top Employees Recognized

Like employees everywhere, Lumpkin County employees are being asked to "do more with less" these days.. When they meet the challenges of their jobs with professionalism, pride and enthusiasm, everyone, from co-workers to customers—that is, citizens—benefits. Seven Lumpkin County employees were recently recognized as Employees of the Year for their respective departments, and one—Pam Stewart—received the all-around Employee of the Year award.

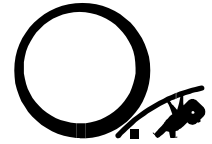
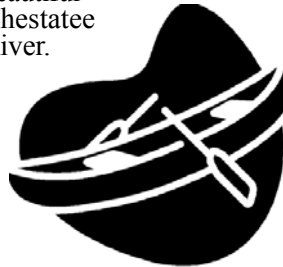
Working as a human resources specialist, Pam handles all the payroll activities that help ensure the county's 250-270 full- and part-time employees get paid. She also handles employee insurance, reconciles and processes statements for payment and helps with processing of information for new hires, employee orientation sessions and other general human resource department functions. She joined the Lumpkin County staff a little over four years ago, following a similar job at Augusta State University. Pam says her favorite part of the job is something she gets to enjoy every day—her co-workers, whom she says are not only great to work with; they're also good friends.

Also receiving Employee of the Year awards were David Bryan (Fleet Maintenance), Monica Kingry (911 Center); David Wimpy (Fire/EMS) Dennis Roland (Code Enforcement) and Judy Parker (Sheriff's Office). The county also said goodbye to Lyman Caldwell and Kenneth Beard, who both recently retired. Lyman had served the county more than 10 years, most recently as Public Buildings Facilities Manager, and Kenneth had kept the ball fields in good shape for Lumpkin County's kids for 11 years.



### Canoe Canoe?

The sign on Highway 60 just north of GA 400 reads: Chestatee River Access. Judging from the number of cars routinely parked in the parking area, plenty of people are taking advantage of the only legal, dedicated public access point to the Chestatee River in the county. The new canoe take-out site, a project marrying federal, local and private investment, adds a new dimension to Lumpkin County's recreational opportunities, offering local and visiting canoers and kayakers greater convenience, safety and enjoyment for trips down the beautiful Chestatee River.



### Working for You!

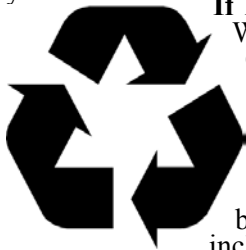
If you have a problem, question or concern involving your county government, answers and assistance are as close as your phone or computer. For contact information for county departments or commissioners, visit [www.lumpkincounty.gov](http://www.lumpkincounty.gov) or call (706) 864-3742.

### Board of Commissioners

Dr. John Raber, Chairman  
Bill Scott, District 1  
Tim Bowden, District 2  
Clarence Stowers, District 3  
Clarence Grindle, District 4

Stan Kelley  
County Manager

Lumpkin County  
99 Courthouse Hill  
Dahlonega, Georgia 30533  
(706) 864-3742  
Fax (706) 864-4760  
[www.lumpkincounty.gov](http://www.lumpkincounty.gov)



### If It's Brown, They Have to Turn It Down

When describing what kind of paper could be accepted in Lumpkin County's recycling program, organizers used to say, "If you can tear it, we can take it." Since the economy changed the market for recycled raw materials last year, now it's more like, "If it's brown, they have to turn it down." The recycling center on Red Oak Flats Road and the convenience site by the high school on Highway 19 North are accepting almost all the materials they used to: No. 1 and No. 2 plastic bottles (only), aluminum drink cans, food cans and most papers, including office paper and mailers, newspaper, magazines and phone books. What cannot be accepted for now are paper products with brown fiber—such as paperboard from cereal and other food packaging boxes, beverage boxes, and brown paper bags. While most of the recycled materials being collected now are not earning money for the county as they once did, we are not having to pay for their removal, as it was feared we would when the bottom fell out of the recycling market last year. "Demand and prices will eventually come back up," says North Georgia Resource Management Authority director Leslie George, who commends the Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners for the decision to keep the recycling program going until then. "We're still keeping tons of material out of landfills, and we're helping keep the recycling habit strong."

Note: There is a strong market for corrugated cardboard, and businesses can save themselves a lot of expense by taking that material to the Red Oak Flats Recycling Center instead of paying to dispose of it at the transfer station. For details call (706) 894-2785.



### On Tap: Water Quality Reports Available

There's nothing like a clear, refreshing glass of ice water on a hot summer day, and customers served by the county's water system can feel good about turning on the tap and tipping back a cool one. The latest annual Water Quality Reports, released by the Lumpkin County Water & Sewerage Authority in June, show each of the 12 systems operated by the authority for the county met or exceeded all the standards set by state water quality regulators and the federal Environmental Protection Agency. If you're a Lumpkin County Water Authority customer, you can learn more about your water system and what's involved in keeping your water safe and clean by

picking up a copy of the Water Quality Report for your neighborhood. Reports are available at the authority's offices at 94 Courthouse Hill, Annex A, behind the county courthouse. Call 706-867-6580 for details.

### Auditors: Clean Opinion

The 2008 annual audit of Lumpkin County's comprehensive annual financial report is complete, and the news is good again this year. Mauldin & Jenkins Certified Public Accountants, LLC, issued an unqualified, or "clean" audit opinion. To learn more about this important standard government oversight process, or to review the county's 2008 financial report, visit [www.lumpkincounty.gov](http://www.lumpkincounty.gov), choose "Departments" at the left and click on the "Finance" icon.

